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W elcome to the winter edition of Conservation news, and what an odd season we're having.

After such a warm autumn your body clock might be struggling to catch up with the changing seasons and the chances are your garden is just as confused.

Luckily we've got some great tips on winter gardening, as well as some brilliant articles to help you ease into the colder months.

With interior design articles on subjects including beds, galley kitchens and maximising your household storage, we've covered pretty much the whole house, not to mention taking a look at fireplaces and stoves to keep you cosy and warm all winter long.

Add to that some delicious recipes, a terrific wine guide and info from some of our favourite local businesses, and we've pretty much got your reading list covered until the New Year.

Dawn



CONSERVATION NEWS

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Caring for your poinsettia

Poinsettias like lots of bright, indirect sunlight and prefer humid conditions. As for watering, let the soil dry out between watering; it should be dry to the touch. Be sure not to let the plants pot stand in water at the plants base or saucer. Poinsettias are sensitive to extreme temperature, so don't place your plant next to a heater or near a drafty window or doorway.



FORCING RHUBARB

You can force rhubarb anytime from late December until March when rhubarb is dormant. However, December and January tend to be the most popular time to begin, with a crop ready to harvest around 7 to 8 weeks later. If you start early, forcing rhubarb can produce an earlier crop, as depending on the rhubarb variety.

Garden notes

Winter doesn't have to be white in the garden, even if there is a blanket of snow covering the soil. Most of the colour comes from berries: hollies, firethorn, and other winter-fruiting plants that add unexpected splashes of reds and oranges to your winter garden.



Treat yourself to snowdrops

If your garden needs a shot of colour, head to the garden centre for some pots of snowdrops or winter aconites. They're a great quick fix, although you could order larger quantities of 'in the green bulbs' for later on in spring. Plant them in light shade and humus-rich soil and they will reward you for years to come. Split them every few years to increase your collection.

To see a beautiful display why not visit Spring Platt in Maidstone. It consists of a one acre garden under continual development with panoramic views of the Weald and over 650 varieties of snowdrop grown in tiered display beds with spring flowers in borders. Dates to view start in January and booking is essential.

Visit www.kentsnowdrops.com for more information and to book.



Winter romance

Camellia sasanqua 'Crimson King' is a medium-sized evergreen shrub of open and spreading habit, with fragrant, single bright rose-red flowers to 10cm in width. To get the best from them they need an acid soil. They also cope well in a pot. This variety is sometimes overlooked, which is a mistake as it flowers before Christmas. It also has the same gloriously glossy-green leaves as the Japanese ones, but it is a little smaller, so is good in front gardens. A few of these scented flowers floating in a bowl of water will bring a little romance to your winter.

Feed the birds

Make your own fat balls. High in protein they will provide birds with plenty of energy. Mix two parts fat – usually lard or suet to one part dry ingredients – this includes good quality bird seed, along with nuts, raisins, grated cheese, mealworms and sunflower hearts. Use a mould, such as a yoghurt pot or cupcake case with string running through the middle like a wick in a candle. Alternatively use a biscuit cutter. Leave to set in the fridge for an hour before hanging out.



What to do in the garden now

- Dead-head autumn-flowering plants and prune summer-flowering shrubs.
- Avoid walking on your lawn or you will damage it fairly easily.
- Add clothes to winter salads to protect from the weather and pests, and wrap pots of half-hardy plants in bubble wrap or fleece.
- Put feeders out. Birds will appreciate nuts, seeds and fat balls. Remember to freshen up water regularly and ensure it doesn't freeze.
- There's still time to get bulbs in the ground in November to guarantee winter colour from January onwards.
- Tidy and clean your garden tools.
- Winter prune apple trees.

Mistletoe magic

Enjoy kissing under the mistletoe? If you have a mature apple tree you can grow your own! Pick mistletoe berries in February, squeeze out the sticky seeds and lodge them in crevices on a medium-large branches of your tree. If they germinate you'll have your own source of mistletoe sprigs in a year or two.



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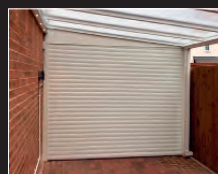
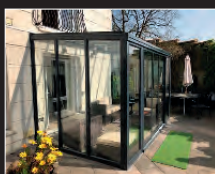
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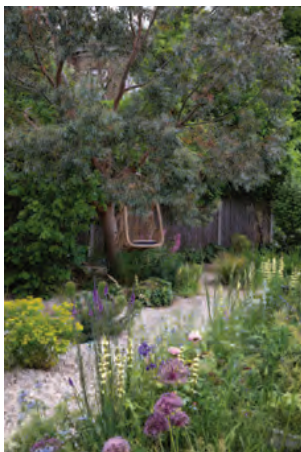




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BANISH THE WINTER BLUES



As leaves fall and branches stand bare, it's easy to feel low when looking out of the window into the grey sky, but what if we can create a beautiful winter garden to banish those winter blues? I am going to give you a few ideas to uplift your mood by adding some colour and scent to your garden.

sarah @ The Garden Creative

Roses all produce hips, as long as you don't dead-head all the flowers. Species roses have the most dramatic hips: dog-rose (*Rosa canina*) and *Rosa rugosa* make wonderful hedges, or additions to an existing hedge, and carry masses of red-orange hips that will attract birds and bring colour to the border.

What about a rambling rose, especially useful to cover the sides of buildings, garages or to scramble into large trees? There are many varieties that give the most stunning display of rosehips during winter months. Seagull is a beautiful rose with clusters of open white flowers in the summer and sprays of tiny rounded red hips in winter, as is *Rosa filipes* Kiftgate, a vigorous variety that will quickly climb high.

Climbers and wall shrubs are great for covering depressingly bare fences and bringing flowers or foliage to the vertical aspect of the garden; this tricks the eye into thinking the garden is bigger than it is!

Evergreen climbers are especially good. Try *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (Star Jasmine) for good green cover all year and the most delightful scent from its star-shaped white flowers in summer. For a floriferous jasmine at this time of year, try *Jasminum nudiflorum* (winter jasmine) for attractive yellow flowers on bare branches from January to March, like little twinkling lights!

Another dramatic wall shrub that can also be grown at the back of a mixed border is *Garrya elliptica* 'James Roof' (photo right) with the most decorative display of long, silver tassel-like catkins throughout winter. It's evergreen, too, so acts as a great backdrop to flowering shrubs and perennials all year round.





Witch Hazel

A dramatic-looking and heavily-scented shrub is Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis*). Unless you have acidic soil, you will need to grow this beauty in a pot in ericaceous compost and ideally water with rainwater, but it's worth the effort because its fiery display of orange or yellow spidery flowers is like no other, and the sweet scent is sure to brighten your day!

Many winter-flowering plants use their scent to attract insects for pollination, so we have an array of intoxicatingly fragrant plants to choose from. Among the best is *Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty', which grows happily at the foot of a wall, so it's great close to the front door where its heady scent from creamy white delicate flowers can be appreciated in late winter and early spring.

Viburnum x bodnantense is a large shrub that flowers on bare branches and fills the whole garden with a strong fragrance from autumn to spring.

There are many stunning shrubs and trees that save a lot of their most impressive displays for winter. Even though deciduous trees and



Pyracantha

If your garden is shady there are many plants that will brighten up your winter days. *Pyracantha* 'Saphyr Orange', known as Firethorn, is a fantastic shrub that will grow in part-shade and gives the most dazzling display of orange berries all winter. They are not fussy, will grow in most soils and are evergreen and provide a great backdrop to flowering plants during spring and summer.

shrubs lose their leaves there are many that are chosen for their fantastic coloured bark, seedheads and catkins. *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta' – twisted hazel – with its long yellow catkins is a fabulous specimen small tree for planting as a stand-alone or at the back of the border. It looks great under-planted with snowdrop and daffodil bulbs and the twisted branches can be brought into the house as displays.

There are many varieties of silver birch that have dramatic white bark throughout the year, more so highlighted in winter, and look great when planted alongside dogwood with red, yellow and black branches. Try *Betula utilis* 'Snow Queen' with *Cornus sericea flaviramea*,



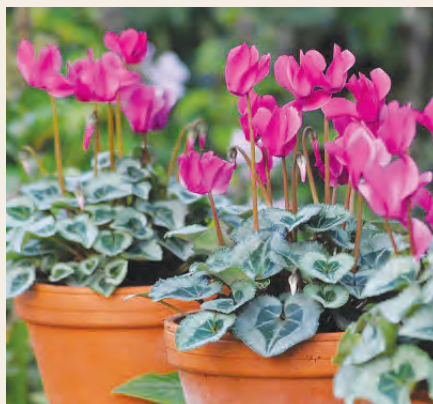
Ornamental grasses

Grasses look great during winter, when their movement and graceful seed-heads can be appreciated without being upstaged by brightly coloured flowers. They create structure in a winter garden alongside shrubs and, because many are upright, they are great for tight spaces. Great varieties to try are *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Boucle', *Pennisetum* 'Hameln', and *Stipa gigantea*.

sanguinea and *kesselringii*. *Prunus serrula* has shiny mahogany bark that looks great under-planted with hellebores and dark-leaved *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'.

Mahonia x media is another wonderful shrub for a shady garden, displaying bright spires of fragrant yellow flowers. *Sarcococca confusa*, or sweet box, is an evergreen shrub with an intoxicating fragrance that loves deep shade. It's perfect for small shady gardens and if planted close to the path or doorway will bring much joy to the senses!

Hellebores, or Christmas roses, also love the shade and come in many colours from white and pale pink through reds and maroons to the darkest, almost black, flowers. They are fantastic



Winter-flowering *Cyclamen coum*

Cyclamen make for a beautiful, happy display in pots and troughs outdoors on the balcony or patio as well as in the garden under shrubs and trees. Incorporate horticultural grit into the compost and choose a pretty container with drainage holes. Plant the hard corms close to the top of the soil where they can get light.

late nectar for foraging bees and insects and being evergreen are great value for money, flowering right through winter. To really enjoy the flowers, bring one or two inside and float them in a small bowl of water.

Make a statement

If there's no space for a new tree or shrub, think about a piece of sculpture that will bring you joy. It can be as simple as a large urn or pot that could be planted with a 'lasagne' of bulbs (layering of spring bulbs) for a continuous display of colour in the new year, or something hand-crafted that can take centre-stage. A water bowl will attract birds and there are many sculptures available online from simple

handmade garden stakes of seed and flower heads to larger animals or abstract forms. A bird feeder or, even better, a bird feeding station will bring many hours of happiness during the coldest months. Place it to be viewed from a window where you can see all your feathered visitors, who will very much appreciate seeds and nuts.

Some ideas to cheer up small spaces, window boxes, balconies or indoors

Plant up a bowl or vase with Paperwhites. *Narcissus tazetta* 'Paperwhite Ziva' can be bought as bulbs and planted now in compost or grit. Keep them well watered in a bright, warm area in the house and they will bring you much joy this winter! If you plant them at two-week intervals, you will enjoy the stunning flowers for longer. Other bulbs you can grow indoors are autumn-flowering crocus in yellow (*Sternbergia lutea*) or purple (*Crocus sativus*) – group them together in a glass vase – and *Amaryllis*, a giant of a flower often available in autumn in kits for growing indoors for a Christmas display. Make a winter wreath. If you can forage winter holly berries, ivy, dried hydrangea heads, pine cones, twisted or coloured sticks, seedheads, and evergreen foliage like eucalyptus or pine, have a go at making your own wreath to hang indoors, on the door or outside where you can see from the window.

Tips to care for the environment

Don't throw away bulbs and plants you have bought for winter displays. Store and reuse them next year, plant outside in the garden, or give away to others.

Try not to buy new plastic decorations, instead forage for natural ones and reuse your shop-bought decs every year.

Buy only peat-free compost and avoid buying sphagnum moss.

Ask questions at your local nurseries and garden centres: do they grow in peat-free compost? Think about supporting local businesses by spending your money there.



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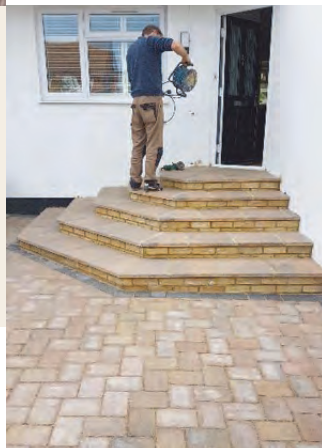
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GOING GREEN

Why not bring evergreen boughs, pinecones and winter berries into your home this winter and create beautiful and sustainable arrangements using flowers and foliage?



From tall conifers to dwarf evergreens, many varieties come in a range of silvers or golds that work well in winter seasonal arrangements. Traditional options, like trimmed boughs of blue spruce, look great in wreaths and tabletop decorations. The flexible branches of juniper are ropy and its silvery berries add a nice texture to evergreen garlands.

Among the many choices, the most commonly planted evergreens are eucalyptus, cypress, pine, cedar, spruce and juniper.

For the freshest greenery, check out farmers' markets and garden centres.

You can also try foraging for items – take a walk through your neighbourhood or local woods and scoop up fallen pinecones, branches from evergreens or holly bushes, and use them in your arrangement.



Once you've got them home you'll want to rehydrate your branches. This step helps your greenery last longer. Before making wreaths or garlands, fill buckets with room-temperature water. Using a hand pruner, make diagonal cuts through the stems (this allows more water to be absorbed), then gently crush the exposed end with a small hammer. Stand them in water for a few hours before working with the plants.

Use varieties that last the entire season

After they have been cut, some varieties stay fresh longer than others. Short-needled pines are very attractive, but a few days after they are cut they will begin to lose leaves. If you need something that will last go for long-needled pines.

Whether greenery is hung in the heat of your house or the cold air outside, these winter environments are intensely dry, and the plant has no source of moisture. Fresh greenery will last indoors for about two weeks, and longer outdoors in cold climates. Display greenery out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources; mist with water daily to help the cuttings last.

Select greenery that's fragrant

If fragrance is of the utmost importance to you, select a combination of aromatic evergreens for your garlands and wreaths. A mix of pine, cedar, eucalyptus, balsam and juniper will result in a uniquely wintry scent. A daily misting of water will help keep evergreens smelling fresh.



WHAT TO USE

Juniper: Especially good for use in outdoor garlands as it won't survive long indoors – heat makes its needles turn brittle.

Pine: Ideal for outdoor decorations, garlands, and arrangements.

Blue Spruce: This variety is good for outdoor garlands and wreaths. Take care when hanging ornaments, as the needles are sharp.

Eucalyptus: It dries quickly but makes attractive, scented cut arrangements and outdoor garlands.

Non-Variegated English Holly: A prickly holiday standard that's ideal for use in garlands and wreaths, this variety lasts up to one week indoors, longer in cut arrangements.

Variegated English Holly: This one is popular in cut arrangements, garlands, and wreaths. It lasts up to one week indoors. It's available nationwide.

Boxwood: A lush addition to cut arrangements, boxwood is ideal for decorating indoors and out.

Bay: Incorporate bay into your indoor and outdoor displays – its fragrant smell will be welcome no matter where the seasonal greenery is placed.

Embellish with dried orange slices, cinnamon sticks, pinecones and seasonal decorative elements.



Dobbies

Table centrepiece

For a stunning centrepiece check out your cupboards or antique or charity shops for interesting props to use: think fruit bowls, terrines and even condiment bottles. Keep whatever you use topped up with water to maximise longevity. Combine winter evergreen with hellebores, pinecones, buxus and skimmia. Add elegant, tall dinner candles for the final finishing touch.



Dress a feature fireplace

Mantelpieces offer a huge number of design options. For a show-stopping arrangement, place soaked Oasis foam in trays along the length of your mantelpiece and then begin creating the overall shape with foliage. Eucalyptus is a top foliage for this time of year – it smells delicious and still looks beautiful when it dries. Variegated ivy, berried ivy and berried eucalyptus are also perfect. Fill the Oasis with foliage so you cannot see any gaps, putting taller pieces at the back and off to the sides and shorter lengths in the middle, with trailing bits cascading at the front. Use evergreen branches secured with wire.

Weave candles in a variety of heights between flowers. If you want fresh flowers, fill huge jardinières or wicker baskets with forced narcissi or hyacinths. Cover the soil with moss and spike in twigs to add support and drama.

Always be careful when adding designs to mantels, ensuring everything is a safe distance from any lit fire.



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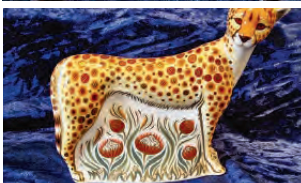
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WATCH THIS SPACE

The art of household storage



Sideboard, £1225, coxandcox.co.uk

In the fast-paced world we live in, the art of decluttering and organising your living space has become more crucial than ever.

A well-organised home not only exudes a sense of tranquillity and order but also enhances the aesthetics of your living space.

Household storage solutions like wardrobes, sideboards, cupboards, and under-bed storage play pivotal roles in achieving this harmony.

Wardrobes: The heart of your bedroom

Wardrobes are the unsung heroes of bedroom storage. They provide the ideal space for clothing, accessories and more, keeping your bedroom tidy and serene. When selecting a wardrobe, consider size, style, and functionality.

For smaller bedrooms, opt for a built-in wardrobe that maximises every inch of available space. Mirrored wardrobe doors can visually expand the room, making it feel more

spacious. Choose a style that complements your bedroom decor, be it classic, modern or rustic. Additionally, a combination of shelves, drawers and hanging space provides versatility in organisation.

There are a number of excellent companies in Kent who offer bespoke storage solutions. Options include reclaimed wood and authentic period styles, and the quality of these pieces is second to none.

Sideboards: the art of display

Sideboards are not only functional but also add elegance to your living room or dining area. These versatile pieces of furniture offer a perfect blend of storage and display space.

Invest in a sideboard that matches your interior design, whether it's cosy cottage core, gorgeous Georgian, or timeless Tudor! The top of the sideboard can be used for displaying



Bedroom Flair



decorative items, family photos, or artwork, while the cupboards and drawers below keep your essentials hidden from view.

A well-organised sideboard can also serve as a bar or a buffet, making it a versatile addition to your home. Use trays and decorative containers to keep the interior neat and organised, and keep glassware, dishes, and table linens at your fingertips for entertaining.

Cupboards: hidden treasure troves

When we say cupboards, we mean anything from kitchen cupboards for dinnerware to linen cupboards in the bathroom. Utilise these spaces to their full potential by optimising the interior layout.

Kitchen cupboards can become a battleground for clutter if not organised properly. Use shelf dividers to separate pots,



London Road Furniture

pans and dishes. Install pull-out drawers for easy access. In a pantry cupboard, use transparent containers to keep dry goods visible and accessible. Label shelves to ensure items have a designated home.

Bathroom cupboards can house a mix of beauty and grooming supplies. Use clear containers to keep smaller items like makeup and toiletries visible and add a lazy Susan to help you access products in the back of deep cupboards with ease.

Under-bed storage: a space-saving solution

Under the bed is often either untapped space or a cacophony of clutter. Investing in under-bed storage containers or drawers to make the most of this space is an absolute game-changer. These storage solutions are perfect for items that are not used frequently, such as seasonal clothing, extra bedding, or off-season sports equipment.

Consider using storage containers with

wheels for easy access. If your bed is too low to accommodate storage containers, you can purchase bed risers to create additional space underneath. Additionally, invest in a bed skirt that conceals the containers and adds an elegant touch to your bedroom decor.

Tips for effective household storage

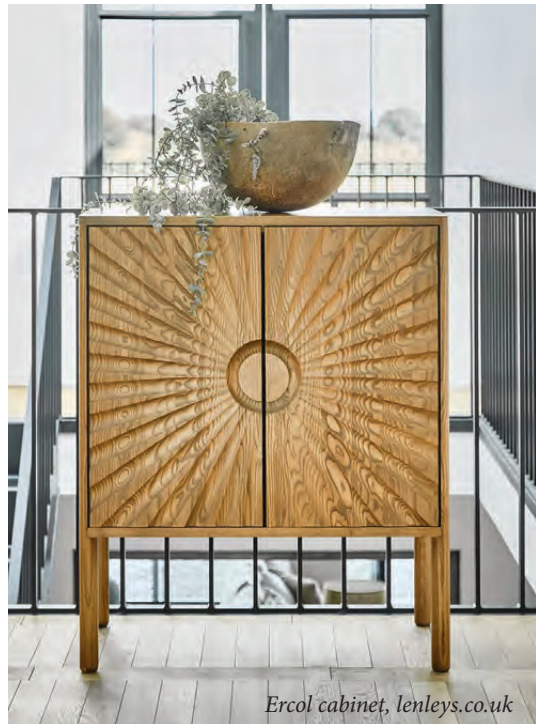
- **Declutter:** To maintain an organised home, periodically assess and declutter your belongings. Donate or sell items you no longer need.
- **Label everything:** Labelling is the secret to maintaining an organised household. Invest in a label maker or use stylish labels to ensure everything has a designated place. It's a big job to start with, but a truly worthwhile use of your time in the long run.
- **Maximise vertical space:** Install shelves or use wall-mounted storage units to make the most of vertical space. This is particularly effective in small rooms.



- **Multi-functional furniture:** Consider furniture pieces with hidden storage, like ottomans with storage compartments, coffee tables with built-in shelving, or tables that fold up into the wall.

- **Create zones:** Designate specific zones for different types of items. For example, create a postal station near your front door to handle incoming and outgoing post.

It can be tough juggling home life, work life and your best life! Household storage is not just about hiding clutter, it's about enhancing your living space and simplifying your daily life. With the right storage solutions, you can turn your home from chaos to calm. Organise, declutter, and make the most of your space, and you'll find that a well-organised home is a haven of peace and productivity.



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- A DAY IN THE LIFE -

BEYOND THE HAMMER

We meet Dave Parker, Managing Director at The Canterbury Auction Galleries

Dave Parker sighs just a little. “People see an auctioneer on TV wielding a gavel for a few minutes and they think that’s the job. But, believe me, a lot goes on beyond that hammer,” he says.

The busy surface of a laboratory-style desk in his office at Canterbury Auction Galleries attests to that. It’s weeks until the next auction, but packs of glinting jewellery – rings, pendants, bracelets – are stacked up next to complex diamond and precious-metal testing

equipment, ready for authenticating.

These days, man-made diamonds are creeping in and need to be identified, he says, handing over a £15,000, five-carat diamond ring to demonstrate what a brilliant-cut diamond should really look like.

Rare watches, 17th century duelling pistols and military medals await their turn to be checked and given a price estimate. He must be a gemmologist, scientist, journalist, paralegal, historian, politician and businessman all at the same time.





It's the same for the rest of the talented team of specialists who work with the public, estimating treasures and ensuring no lost masterpiece goes unfound. Most staff have been at the auction house for decades and are all experts in various subject areas – from ceramics to fine art, clocks to silver, and furniture. Managing director Dave has been here for 15 years, specialising in militaria, jewellery and watches.

The auction house holds six weekend sales a year, but between those dates Dave and the team are flat out. Porters constantly heft items being collected or arriving, phones jangle all day with enquiries and on most Fridays there is a busy free valuation day, when the public can come in with items to be identified, possibly to sell. There's no 'average' day and that's the way Dave likes it.

"You've no idea what you're going to see from one day to the next. One day you might be visiting a cathedral or stately home, the next meeting a rock star – or going to an ordinary house that turns out to be full of astonishing antiques. You just never know."



Although an experienced auctioneer, these days he hosts auctions only for charitable, black-tie events. Co-director Cliona Kilroy and colleague Edward Smissen take "showtime", as he calls the regular auctions, these days – all held online.

"Auction days are exciting. But I prefer the challenge of getting in the items that we sell, meeting people and hearing the histories of their items. Lots of these things have gone on to be the subject of talks, they're so fascinating."

It's the human side of the business that fires Dave up – especially the times when he can help families achieve life-changing sums.

He recalls visiting a family selling the medals of a Royal Military Policeman who served in WW1 and WW2, even protecting Churchill on occasion. The family expected around £400 but the hammer came down at more than £14,000. Through tears, the vendor explained that the

“YOU'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SEE FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT. ONE DAY YOU MIGHT BE VISITING A CATHEDRAL... THE NEXT MEETING A ROCK STAR.



windfall couldn't have come at a better time: her sister had been killed and they had just adopted the children.

"Those moments feel really good: to know you've done your best and honoured the memory of a loved one," he says.

As Dave and many of the team are qualified valuers, a lot of time is spent going to people's homes to provide a professional valuation of items for probate. "It's a very sensitive time. There will be much-loved heirlooms holding memories for people and it's usually very hard to let go. But one cannot keep everything. We're grateful that families trust us with their heritage."

The best things about the job? "Handling some of the most beautiful items in the world and finding out their back stories. We're all avid historians – most of us have been here for decades because we love what we do and enjoy meeting the public."

Many of those stories have gone on to be the subject of public talks. His office in the historic auction house building has a mantelpiece full of items that tell those tales – enthusiastically related by Dave at the drop of a hat.

They include a print of Shackleton's ship *Endurance* trapped in ice; a candle-lighting contraption from the 1700s; and a fragment of



a brass porthole from WW1 mine-laying ship *Princess Irene*, which exploded off the Kent coast with the loss of more than 350 lives.

"I'm just as passionate about the business now as I was when I first joined," says this energetic, larger-than-life character. "We sell history, plain and simple."

There's grind, too. He made the decision early to get ahead of the rapidly-evolving technology and adopted online bidding, which needs constant updating. Then there are ever-changing rules on subjects as wide as money-laundering, exporting and record-keeping which he must stay on top of. It's not all fun.

Although fun there is... the maddest item he's sold? "It has to be a 'haunted' rocking horse. Every night before I left the building, I'd turn it round, so that when the porters came in they thought it had moved. They got pretty freaked!" he says, laughing. And the best thing he's sold? "Ah, I haven't discovered it – yet!"

Visit www.thecanterburyauctiongalleries.com for more information.

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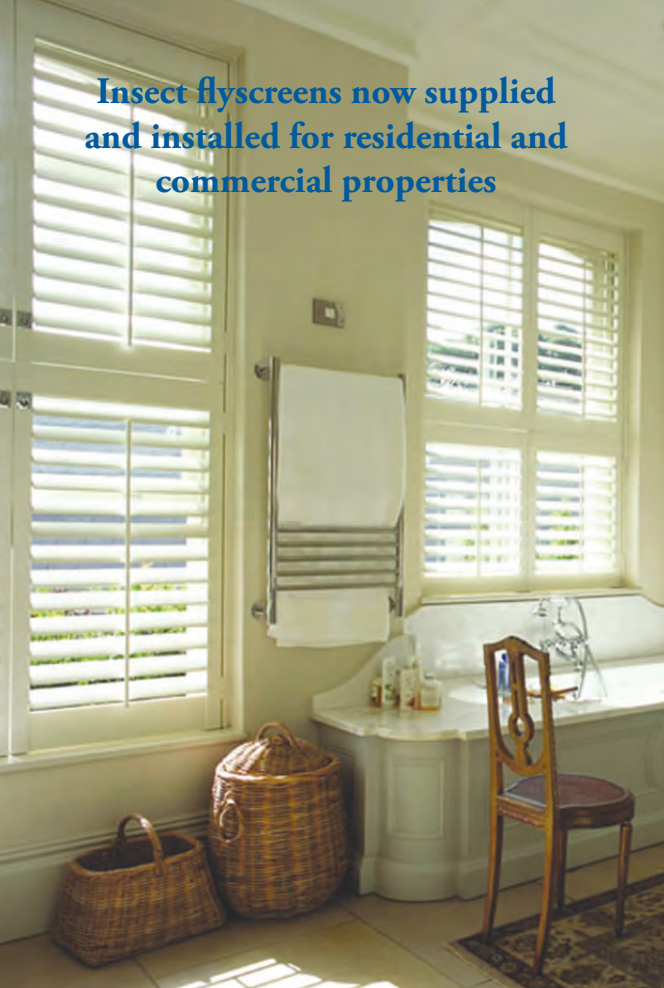
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EMANUEL'S INTERIORS

Emanuel's Soft Furnishing Interiors of Tankerton, near Whitstable, is a long-established interiors business that pride themselves on getting to know their customers and providing quality interior design and decoration for homes and businesses across Kent and beyond.



At Conservation News we've showcased many family run businesses that provide quality interior designs and furnishings. Emanuel's Interiors stand out from the crowd because of the time they take to really get to know their customers, ensuring each client chooses an interiors scheme that suits their taste and budget, that could last them for years to come.

Emanuel's Interiors was established in Tankerton 32 years ago by Helen and Gary

Emanuel. Helen was always interested in colours and interior decoration from an early age, she recalls helping her Mum decorate their home and picking out the wallpaper and colour scheme.

Emanuel's was established firstly as a home-based curtains business, but Helen soon wanted to get to the next level and expand the business further. So she started looking for a shop space to grow their business, showcase their stock and make their curtains.

Because they started out as a curtains business Emanuel's have become true specialists in making and fitting curtains and blinds for any dimension and style of window. They particularly specialise in very wide curtains and blinds. More recently, with the increasing popularity of bifold doors that open onto the garden in open plan homes, they have become specialists at fitting bespoke blinds for all dimensions of these bi-fold doors.

Emanuel's pride themselves on their customer service, bringing samples to customers in their own homes and discovering what their customer really wants from a room redesign or a new set of blinds or curtains. Finding the right solution for each customer is vital and they have a lot of customers with specific needs; like people with medical needs who want remote options or roller blinds that provide privacy and don't gather dust.

Emanuel's really get to know their customers, often working with them on a range of ideas, finding out their favourite colours and what suits their personality and eliminating looks until they find right scheme. Perhaps the customer has seen pictures of interiors they like and want advice, Helen prides herself on offering creative solutions and being a good listener.



I DON'T HAVE A CERTAIN STYLE,
I COMBINE WHAT IS RIGHT FOR
EACH CUSTOMER, WHETHER IT
BE A CONTEMPORARY STYLE OR
MORE TRADITIONAL AND HISTORIC
PERIOD LOOK...

They will discuss ideas in-situ in the room in question until they find the perfect choice. Helen says that sometimes she takes a customer lots of books of swatches and they still can't decide. However, she finds that the more vision she can give a customer, the quicker they make decisions and the happier they'll be with the end result.

Emanuel's provide whole packages for houses if required including curtains, blinds, wallpaper, paint, and re-upholstering of furniture from their wide choice of quality fabrics. Helen has found that in 32 years in business, some of her customer's design choices will stay in their homes for a very long time and others will come back to them for a refit after a few years, when they want a change of style or to follow a new interiors trend.

Helen says, "I don't have a certain style, I combine what is right for each customer, whether it be a contemporary style or more traditional and historic period look, I embrace everything because I love all types of design."

Emanuel's provide interiors solutions for both domestic and commercial customers. They work on everything from new build houses to hotels and private residences. They have several established commercial customers in the area including the Whitstable Playhouse Theatre, for whom Helen project managed a complete redecoration of the bar area. They helped design the interiors for the new Whitstable Golf Club; choosing the paint colour and carpets, as well as the window furnishings. They have also done work for Christchurch University and several schools.

In a similar way to what they do for domestic customers, Emanuel's can either offer a complete interiors solution for commercial customers



including wallpapering, painting and providing furnishings – offering a total redesign. Or they can work with the colours and interior design elements that a business already has in place.

Emanuel's have also embraced technology in the world of interiors. Helen's son Gary fits all the shutters and sets up the motorisation of blinds and curtains for customers. Some people want motorisation for practical reasons, for example they want blinds or curtains that they don't touch so they don't get dirty or perhaps they're in a hard-to-reach area like a landing. Other people just love a gadget and want the convenience of simply pressing a button.

Emanuel's Interiors work across all of East Kent and the rest of the county, as well as London. They have also worked further afield in places like the Cotswolds and Edinburgh as well as abroad in countries including Switzerland and France.

On the back of the popularity of Whitstable, nearby Tankerton (which was a popular place in the 50s and 60s) is coming back on the map. With the increasing popularity of the entire area, they often work on second homes in Tankerton or Whitstable for people who then ask them to refit their main houses in London.

Emanuel's customers come from the internet and walk-ins or very often from recommendations, because they are such an established business in the local area. Because they're community-based, they pride themselves on looking after their customers and some who use the business are the second or third generation of one family. Revealing what a loyal customer base they have.

For more information visit their website:
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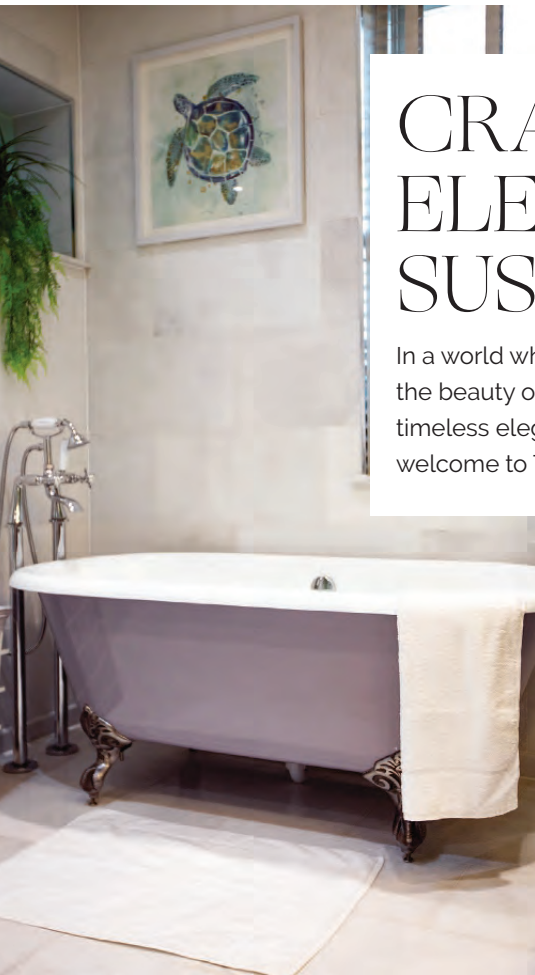
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Our cast iron baths invite you to indulge in moments of relaxation, combining classic design with modern luxury. They are more than mere fixtures; they're invitations to unwind, escape, and rediscover the art of relaxation. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, our baths blend classic design with modern functionality, offering an experience that transcends time. Whether you envision a sanctuary of solace or a focal point of opulence, our cast iron baths stand ready to transform your bathing ritual into a symphony of comfort and elegance.

At The Victorian House, we don't just create furniture and decor; we weave stories into every piece. Our bespoke indoor and outdoor granite and marble tables are meticulously crafted, each slab telling a tale of nature's artistry. The interplay of color and texture in our marble vanity units and granite worktops redefine sophistication, while our marble floor and wall tiles transform spaces into timeless works of art.

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The English Chimneypiece

A WARM EMBRACE

In the heart of a period home, the fireplace serves as a portal to the past, a functional work of art, and a cosy sanctuary during chilly winters. The stories of fireplaces, fire surrounds, fires, heating, radiators, and Agas are interwoven with the history of architecture, interior design, and the way we have heated our homes over the centuries.

In period living, the fireplace takes centre stage. It's not just a source of warmth but a testament to craftsmanship and design. Across the centuries, fireplaces have evolved from simple, utilitarian structures to intricate pieces of art. In the medieval period, they were often found in the centre of the room, radiating heat and providing a communal gathering point. As architecture evolved,

fireplaces found their place against walls, giving rise to the quintessential fire surround. Today, period homeowners cherish these features for their historical and aesthetic significance. The design of fire surrounds has followed the trends of the era. From Tudor oak carvings to the Georgian's neoclassical symmetry, and the Victorian era's ornate details, each period boasts its own unique charm.



Different types of fire

Fireplaces, of course, are nothing without the fires that bring them to life. Wood-burning, gas, electric, and even bioethanol fires offer diverse options to fit the style and needs of any period living space.

Traditionalists often favour wood-burning fires, which provide not only warmth but the delightful aroma of burning logs. These fires hark back to a time when gathering firewood was a daily task and the hearth was the heart of the home. Modern wood-burning stoves and fireplaces, with their elegant cast-iron designs, offer the same ambience with added efficiency. It's important to keep your wood-burning fire well-maintained, to avoid the potential risks that come with soot build-up etc. A chimney sweep or maintenance company is a must, as is ethically-sourced fuel (many areas have now banned the use of 'green' or wet wood).

Gas fires offer convenience without sacrificing style. They provide instant heat and are easily controlled, making them popular choices for those who want both beauty and functionality. Electric fires have come a long way in mimicking the glow and crackle of a real fire. They are ideal for those who appreciate the aesthetics of a fireplace, but don't want the hassle of maintenance. These alternative burners can be custom-made to fit perfectly into your décor and are very realistic: the Tudors who built your house would barely notice the difference.

The evolution of home heating

Before the general adoption of central heating, homes relied on fireplaces and stoves for warmth. In grand period homes, these were often supplemented by ornate radiators. Cast-iron radiators, once considered a symbol of wealth and

Whitstable Stove Shop



luxury, were, painstakingly designed to blend seamlessly with the room's decor. They were as much about form as they were about function, serving as exquisite examples of Victorian engineering and design.

With the introduction of central heating, the reliance on fireplaces diminished and radiators took on a more utilitarian role. In the modern era, however, cast-iron radiators have made a resurgence in period homes, celebrated for their vintage charm and even heat distribution. Restored originals or faithful reproductions are prized for their aesthetic contribution to period interiors.

Aga: The enduring icon of period kitchens

The Aga cooker is a beloved fixture in period kitchens, particularly in country homes. The brainchild of Swedish scientist Gustaf Dalén, Agas have been gracing kitchens since the 1920s, embodying the perfect blend of form and function. These iconic cookers are known for their distinctive cast-iron construction, radiant heat, and slow-cooking capabilities.

Agas often serve as focal points in the kitchen, with their classic design adding a touch of timeless elegance. They come in a range of colours, allowing homeowners to customise their Aga to suit the aesthetic of their period kitchen.





The English Chimneypiece



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Cast iron radiators, from £276, thevictorianhouse.co.uk

The revival of period heating elements

In the 21st century, period living has seen a resurgence in the appreciation of traditional heating elements. Many homeowners are retrofitting their homes with the elegance of the past while incorporating modern technology for efficiency.

High-efficiency wood burning models emit fewer emissions and provide an environmentally responsible way to heat a period home.

Radiators, too, are making their mark, both as functional heating elements and decorative accents. Modern cast-iron radiators offer the best of both worlds, marrying historic charm with contemporary heating technology. They are energy-efficient, ensuring that your period living space is cosy and environmentally responsible.

“IN PERIOD LIVING, THE FIREPLACE TAKES CENTRE STAGE. IT’S NOT JUST A SOURCE OF WARMTH BUT A TESTAMENT TO CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DESIGN.

In summary, fireplaces play a vital role in creating the perfect period living space. Their timeless designs and rich histories make them not only functional but also deeply meaningful elements of your home. As we embrace the past while looking to the future, these iconic features continue to offer warmth, comfort, and a tangible connection to the generations that have come before us.

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cultfurniture.com



Le Crueset mug, £15
johnlewis.com



Candle, £27, lenleys.co.uk



Clock, £77,
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Cutlery, £95,
neptune.com



Lenny leather chair, £1,290
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Home style

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giselagraham.co.uk



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sparkle.lighting



Cushion, £43,
jtextile.co.uk



Bench, £495,
frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk

Frame, £12,
johnlewis.com

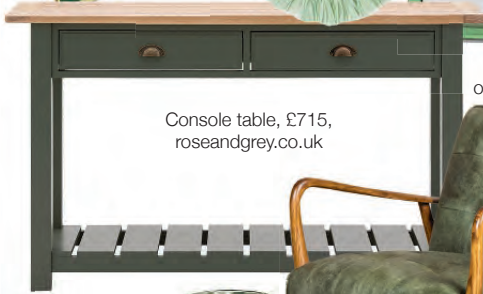
Raffia mats, £21,
talkingtables.com

Set of 4 wine glasses, £65, oka.com
at Hoopers, Tunbhridge Wells



Jug, £12.99,
janeabbott.com

Cushion, £140,
neptune.com



Console table, £715,
roseandgrey.co.uk

Mirror, £125,
oliverbonas.com



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ELEVATING YOUR SLEEP EXPERIENCE

Beds are more than just pieces of furniture; they are the sanctuaries where we spend a significant portion of our lives. Our choice of beds, bedsteads, mattresses, and bedding has a profound impact on the quality of our sleep and, consequently, our overall well-being.



Coniston four poster bed from £2,775 [neptune.com](https://www.neptune.com)

In this comprehensive guide, we will delve into the world of beds and bedsteads, including mattresses and bedding, to help you make informed decisions that will transform your sleep experience into a blissful journey of relaxation and rejuvenation.

The Foundation: bedsteads

Let's start with the foundation of any comfortable bed - the bedstead. Bedsteads are not only functional but also contribute to the aesthetic appeal of your bedroom. They come in various styles, materials, and designs, catering to a wide range of tastes.

Wooden bedsteads are timeless and versatile, lending a warm and inviting feel to any bedroom. Whether you prefer the rustic charm of oak or the sleek lines of teak, wooden

bedsteads can transform your sleeping space into a cosy, period-living friendly retreat.

For those with a penchant for modern aesthetics, metal bedsteads offer a sleek and minimalist design. The clean lines and durability of metal bedsteads make them a popular choice in contemporary bedrooms and provide an interesting contrast to the wood and beams of your period home.

Upholstered bedsteads add a touch of luxury and comfort to your bedroom. Choose from a variety of fabrics, colours, and textures to complement your interior design while enjoying the plushness they offer.

Mattresses: the key to comfort

While bedsteads set the stage, it's the mattress that plays the starring role in ensuring a good



Bedford bed, call for price, wellsinteriors.co.uk



Ranger bed from £849, designerbedsltd.co.uk



Ultimate mattress from £399, the-bedpost.co.uk

night's sleep. Your choice of mattress can make or break your sleep quality, so it's essential to consider various factors.

Innerspring mattresses, with their coil support systems, offer excellent support and are known for their durability. They are available in various firmness levels to suit individual preferences.

Memory Foam Mattresses conform to your body's shape, providing exceptional comfort and support. They are particularly useful for relieving pressure points and minimising disturbances from a restless partner.

Combining the best of both worlds, hybrid mattresses feature a combination of innerspring coils and foam layers. This results in a comfortable, supportive, and responsive sleeping surface.

Testing a mattress before purchase is essential. Although you may have spotted a 'bargain' online, this is really not a product you can buy sight unseen. Find a quality business with an extensive showroom and take full advantage of their advice and trial periods before committing.

The importance of bedding

Once you've chosen your bedstead and mattress, it's time to consider bedding to complete the equation. High-quality bedding not only adds to the aesthetic appeal of your bed but also contributes to your overall sleep comfort.

Invest in high-thread-count sheets made from natural fibres like cotton or linen. They are not only soft and breathable but also durable, ensuring your sheets stay comfortable and last a long time.

The right pillow can make a world of difference in your sleep quality. Consider your



YOUR BED IS MORE THAN
JUST A PIECE OF FURNITURE;
IT'S WHERE YOU REJUVENATE
AND RESTORE YOUR BODY
AND MIND.

sleeping position when choosing the perfect pillow – side sleepers benefit from firm pillows, while back or stomach sleepers may prefer softer options.

Select duvets or comforters that provide the right amount of warmth and insulation for the season. Lightweight options are suitable for summer, while heavier ones are perfect for cooler nights.

Enhance your mattress's comfort with a mattress topper. Memory foam or feather toppers can add a luxurious layer of cushioning, while cooling toppers are perfect for those who suffer from hot flashes.

Creating your sleep oasis

With your bedstead, mattress, and bedding in place, it's time to turn your bedroom into a sleep oasis. Consider these additional elements to maximise your sleep quality:

LIGHTING:

Invest in dimmable, warm-coloured lighting to create a relaxing ambiance in the evening.

ROOM TEMPERATURE:

Maintain a cool, comfortable room temperature for optimal sleep.

DECLUTTER:

A tidy, clutter-free bedroom promotes a sense of calm and relaxation.



Edie bedspread from £200 [neptune.com](https://www.neptune.com)



[frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk](https://www.frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk)

Your bed is more than just a piece of furniture; it's where you rejuvenate and restore your body and mind. Making informed choices about your bedstead, mattress, and bedding can greatly enhance your sleep experience, leaving you refreshed and ready to face the day. So, when you next retire to your bedroom, remember that it's not just a place to sleep but a sanctuary of comfort and relaxation that you've carefully crafted to meet your unique needs and style.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Despite the priority being on functionality, galley kitchens can also be beautiful spaces brimming with character.



Tall cupboards and wall units on both sides increase the feeling of being boxed in, but leaving one side low can be ideal if it opens into a wider living space. But that's not to say that you can't incorporate tall cabinets into one wall. In narrow rooms you need to utilise all available space.

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a large dining kitchen or an open-plan extension, but that doesn't mean that a small kitchen can't look great.

Most commonly found in Victorian terraced houses, galley kitchens are seen in homes up and down the country.

The name historically comes from the galleys of ships, and the compact galley-style kitchen can still be found on boats, submarines, and aircraft today. Their design principles are ergonomic, optimising the minimal space to maximise storage and work areas, making it easy to move around.



Pale, light-reflecting colours such as white and cream look best in a galley kitchen. However, this doesn't necessarily mean an all-white kitchen is the only option. Soft shades, like sage green, duck egg or soft neutrals work well in a small kitchen.

Photo: Hogwood House



Colours, materials, and finishes are important in any kitchen, but especially so when you're trying to enhance a tiny space like a classic galley kitchen. Common trends for kitchens of all sizes include light and neutral colour schemes, with natural materials like warm woods and granite or quartz.

The reflective nature of high gloss kitchen cabinets makes them an ideal choice for small kitchens, and galley kitchens are no exception. Alternatively, if you'd like your cabinetry to have a little more texture, Shaker-style kitchen cabinets can add some character. They're decorative enough to create visual interest without being overly ornamental or clashing with other décor, and Shaker kitchens are perfect for neutral palettes.

Photos: Above - potts.ltd.uk

Right: whitecliffkitchens.co.uk





Photo: Bedroom & Kitchen Flair (www.bedroomflair.co.uk)

With a galley kitchen, you need to maximise every square inch of storage space. Consider open shelving like in the lovely galley kitchen shown above.

Just because your galley kitchen is small doesn't mean you can't create a calm and sophisticated atmosphere with carefully selected colours and materials. Too much detail can make a small kitchen feel cluttered even when the counters are clear,

so you'll need to put some thought into planning your fittings and accessories. Light is vital in making a narrow galley kitchen seem larger than it really is. Never underestimate the influence of strategic lighting. Layer your lights by installing task lighting in key areas – like spotlights or downlights underneath cupboards or shelves, or plinth lights at the base.

KITCHEN CREATIVITY

Hub of the home, heart of the house... a kitchen is very much the centre of operations in modern-day living.

We all hanker after a clean yet comfortable space we can be proud of, where meals are prepared or the kettle filled while family, friends and even pets are encouraged to drift in and out to be sociable without getting in the way! No wonder that, according to property portal Zoopla, a redesigned kitchen is considered one of the top three features you can introduce to add value to a home (the others, in case you were wondering, are loft conversions and off-street parking).

But in these times of belt-tightening against the rising cost of living, a new kitchen may be thought to be out of the question. This is where the idea of refacing comes in – as offered by Kent Company White Cliff Kitchens. They can deliver you a new-look kitchen at up to 50% cheaper than a wholesale replacement, and with less disruption to your life.

A 'reface' replaces existing worktops, drawer fronts, cupboard doors, plinths and cornices with made-to-measure units chosen by you from a range of styles, materials and colours.

White Cliff Kitchens can also install completely new kitchens and fit appliances, but their speciality is in refacing. It's the new and quick way to modernise an outdated

kitchen, paying attention to changing tastes, new trends and the personal needs of the customer.

With over 20 years of carpentry experience behind them, they have been based in Sandwich since 2020 and cover the whole of Kent.

The process begins with a free initial consultation. White Cliff will visit your home, checking your existing units to ensure they are sound and in good condition. Accurate measurements are taken, and in the comfort of your own home you can select colour and styles of doors, fronts and accessories such as handles from the representative's directories. All of this, can be delivered and installed within eight weeks.

Another advantage of this approach is that you can choose the look of your new kitchen while standing in the old one! Whether you long for a clean and clinical look, or something bold and colourful... whether you aim for traditional style or effortless chic, refacing can help you achieve that dream kitchen.

For more information visit
www.whitecliffkitchens.co.uk,
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CRAFTED WITH CARE

Handmade in Bridge could be one of those 'best kept secrets' that only the select few know of. We meet the self-effacing innovator behind this modest sounding brand who's niche products have captured the attention of many discerning clients.

Photographs: www.photoboothportraits.co.uk



Crafted with loving care, these unique wearable works of art are seductively simple, after all, what could be more straightforward than a shawl? And yet intertwined within each single garment are many influences and inspirations, that are blended together in delicate patterns, motifs and an array of beautiful colours that deliver something that is far more than the sum of its parts. Drape one around your shoulders and it is like being given a loving knitted embrace. One that lasts as it enfolds you in a soft and warming woollen hug.

A tale like this one is so often a story of a life, and in this instance that's definitely the case. It's the story of Sima, who is the maker of these wonderful creations, because without her life's journey with all its rich influences and events that have shaped her, the vision she has for her art would not exist. Let's backtrack to the mid-1990s, when Sima, then a teenager travelled from her home

in Jordan to live with her grandmother in Earls Court in London. Her family are Circassian, an exiled nation native to the historical region of Circassia, in the North Caucasus, located east of the Black Sea, between Russia, Turkey and Iran. Circassia is no longer a sovereign country, a result of a genocide perpetrated by the Russian Empire in the 19th century, in a process

of ethnic cleansing they were exiled to modern-day Turkey, and areas of the Middle East. Back in the 1990s it was estimated that approximately 3.7 million Circassian people were in diaspora in over 50 countries.

Sima's family had settled in Jordan, and at the age of 15, she took the very brave step of moving to London to live with her grandmother to continue and finish her secondary education. Having always been of a creative nature, which manifested in an interest in fashion, her next step was to study Fashion Design at degree level, which is where she found her groove and cemented her love of colour, fashion and textiles. Sadly,

“WITHIN EACH SINGLE GARMENT ARE MANY INFLUENCES AND INSPIRATIONS, THAT ARE BLENDED TOGETHER IN DELICATE PATTERNS, MOTIFS AND AN ARRAY OF BEAUTIFUL COLOURS...”



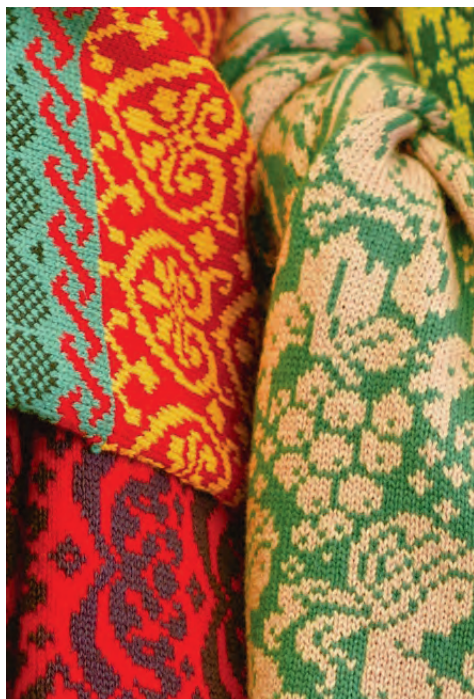
her grandmother passed away around this time and the young Sima embarked on a period of making her living in various positions, which always had a common theme as they were in the fashion arena, be it retail, or pattern cutting for independent fashion houses.

She forged ahead, making her living and learning as she went, whenever it was possible, and she moved to the London borough of Camden, which she loved as it is a busy, colourful and vibrant area often associated with alternative culture and fashion. It was full of lively markets, music venues and a place that historically had attracted many artists and creatives with its heady bohemian atmosphere.

In 2013 she had, what she describes as, the great good fortune to spot an advert placed by Penny Burdette, a well known knitwear designer based in Camden, who was looking

for a representative to sell her knitwear. Sima hit it off with Penny and she got the job. She absolutely loved the stylish knitwear, and when her new boss needed an extra knitter, Sima discovered that she has a passion for knitting. She says she owes this wonderful lady such a lot, she taught her everything from scratch, including how to use a knitting machine and thanks to her kindness she found an outlet for her creativity and something she really enjoys doing, that has given her the basis of her business to this day. She remains forever grateful to Penny Burdette.

She moved to the quiet village of Bridge in Kent back in 2019 and works from a studio in her home. The beautiful and unique shawls that Sima lovingly produces are made on a vintage Knitmaster 360 machine, it was manufactured in Japan back in 1975, which coincidentally is



her birth year, and is a vital part of her creative process that brings her visions to life. She draws her inspiration from folk tales and myths, some of which are from her Circassian roots as well as other cultures. She also loves researching art, sculpture and antique textiles at the V&A Museum. Architecture also inspires her, she's recently has become intrigued by nearby Canterbury Cathedral, with its glorious colourful stained glass windows, and the beauty of the natural world, animals, wildlife and plants, all call to her and are channelled into her art using the timeless Fair Isle technique she learned from her mentor. Each design is initially sketched by hand, then creatively translated into a knitting pattern, and eventually made by hand using the vintage, knitting machine. She works alone on this meditative and delicate process.

After exploring several different materials over a number of years, including lambs wool and other yarns, she now only uses sustainable, cruelty-free Merino yarn from British suppliers. It is available in myriad colours, giving her a rich palette to bring her intricate designs to life and its unrivalled softness lends a luxurious quality to each hand crafted piece that is both beautiful and eco-friendly.

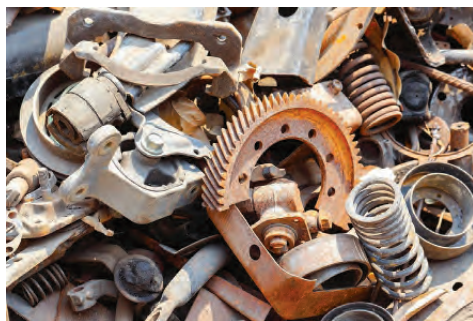
Her business is almost entirely carried out online via her website where it is possible for clients to view her collection, interact with her and make purchases. Sales have increased over the past couple of years and to her surprise she has many international sales, from the USA, Canada, Australia and Scandinavia. In fact



there is an American star who is a big fan of her work. Quite often these snippets of info are a secret, however she can reveal that it is Sharon Stone. Ms Stone has one of her shawls and absolutely loves it, and follows Handmade in Bridge on Instagram.

Not all of Sima's business is international and she sells to clients in the UK and locally in Kent. It is possible to make an appointment to make a personal visit to discuss a commission and choose to have a bespoke shawl made. As these are handmade products the process can take a couple of weeks, including delivery depending on the location, however there is also a collection service for those who are closer.

For more info visit: handmadeinbridge.com or call 07935 516212



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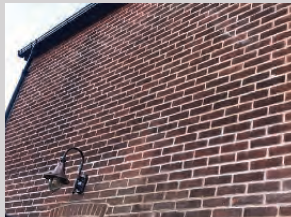
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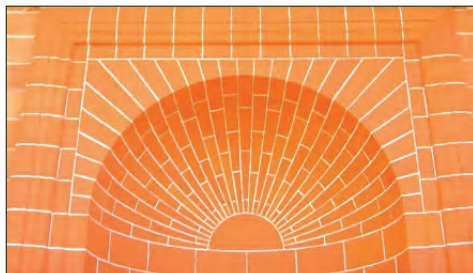
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SMALLHYTHE PLACE

A hidden gem in the heart of Kent

Discover actor Ellen Terry's early 16th-century house, its cottage garden and Barn Theatre in Smallhythe near Tenterden. (nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/smallhythe-place)



The dwelling at Smallhythe was originally known as 'Port House'. It lay close to the River Rother before the river and sea receded, providing a thriving shipyard ('hythe' meaning 'landing place' in Old English). This waterway served the kings Henry V and Henry VIII, who had large ships built there including The Great Gallyon of 1546. Later in the 16th century when the sea-access began silting up so local craftsmen had to look elsewhere for work.

The Tudor house was later bought by leading Victorian actress Ellen Terry in 1899. Ellen gave use of the property's Priest's House to her daughter Edy Craig who followed her mother's path into theatre as a producer and costume designer. Edy also founded and managed the Pioneer Players from 1911 until 1926 – a theatre society staging innovative plays, particularly around the topic of women's suffrage, in London. The house was opened to the public by Terry's



daughter in 1929, as a memorial to her mother, showcasing both personal mementos as well as letters collected from a national appeal after her mother's death. The National Trust supported Craig in her running of the museum from 1939 and took over the property when she died in 1947. It was designated as a Grade II listed building by English Heritage on 8 May 1950.

Barn Theatre

A large wooden barn, has been converted to a theatre. The 70-seat theatre hosts around 30 productions a year.

The Ellen Terry costume collection

In addition to a wealth of personal ephemera, Smallhythe Place also hosts an archive of Terry's role in the Aesthetic Movement and the role she played in the design of her stage wardrobe. The Costume Room displays a selection of sumptuous costumes dating from Terry's time at the Lyceum Theatre, in particular three costumes from Henry Irving's spectacular production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Lyceum Theatre and the iridescent beetle-wing dress she wore as *Lady Macbeth* in 1888 designed by Alice Comyns Carr.



Dame Ellen Terry

Ellen Terry was one of the first modern stars of the British stage. A contemporary of Eleonora Duse and Sarah Bernhardt, she acted opposite Henry Irving at the Lyceum Theatre. Her portrait was painted by the leading artists of her day, GF Watts and John Singer Sargent. A hard-working performer, she toured the UK and USA with the Lyceum company and later lectured in the UK, USA and Australia on Shakespeare's female characters. A generous-hearted and free-spirited woman, she was ahead of her time in many ways.



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HOW TO...

MAINTAIN ROOFS & GUTTERS

YOU WILL NEED:

- Ladder • Stiff-bristled brush • Secateurs
- Binoculars • Drill • Screwdriver • Gutter grid and clips • Scissors

■ SWEEP AWAY MOSS

Sweep the build up away with a stiff-bristled brush once a year.

■ CUT BACK CLIMBING PLANTS

Keep climbing plants in check. If left to grow, rambling roses creep between tiles and ivy can disturb and dislodge tiles.

■ INSPECT ROOF WITH BINOCULARS

Look for slipped tiles and check the ridge carefully. Try to spot any compromised flashing and mortar.

■ DEAL WITH SLIPPED TILES

It can be easier to move slipped tiles by inserting wooden wedges to raise, then lift the nib of the broken tile clear of the batten.

■ CHECK WHEN RAINING

Watch how the roof copes. Make a note of where there are sagging gutters and interruptions to the flow of water.

■ CLEAR DEBRIS IN GUTTERS

First stuff a rag into the gutter outlet to stop debris going into the downpipe. A plastic bottle shaped into a scoop is ideal for clearing waste. If rain cascades from the top of a downpipe, lift out the litter from the gutter outlet rather than pushing it down. When you've fished out what you can, take a short length of hosepipe and push it into the downpipe to make sure no blockages remain.



Cotterell Court, Petham

A highly impressive Grade II Listed property, with four bedrooms, a one bedroom annexe, outbuildings and extensive grounds

Cotterell Court is a fine Grade II Listed house, thought to date originally from the 12th century, making it one of the oldest homes in the UK. Outside, the red brick, timber and rendered elevations have been immaculately preserved, while inside there are delightful original features, combined with elegant modern fittings.

The impressive reception hall displays exposed timber beams, wood panelling, intricate carvings, leaded and stained-glass windows

and a magnificent open oak staircase leading to a galleried first-floor landing. The well-proportioned drawing room has a dual aspect and a fireplace, fitted with a wood-burning stove. There is also a study/office and a dining room, which has a splendid inglenook fireplace. The kitchen has elegant Shaker-style units, white quartz worktops and integrated appliances.

The first floor has four double bedrooms, including the en suite principal bedroom, together with a family bathroom. Both the





bathroom and en-suite feature stylish, contemporary bathroom suites.

The annexe

The annexe provides useful self-contained accommodation, which could be utilised as guest accommodation or as a holiday let. There is a large open-plan sitting and dining area and kitchen, with modern kitchen fittings. A shower room is situated off the main entrance lobby. Upstairs there is a fully air-conditioned 34ft bedroom with skylights and fitted storage.

Outside

At the entrance to the property, gates open onto a paved and tarmac driveway, which provides plenty of parking space and leads to a gravel courtyard area with access to the outbuildings. Included in the outbuildings are a two bay garage with extensive storage and workshop space to the sides, a utility room, a bike room, a large office space with storage over and a large greenhouse. The garden includes paved terracing, extensive, rolling lawns and meadows, with various shrubs, trees and hedgerows. Beyond the garden there are open fields, backing onto open countryside.

Location

The picturesque village of Petham benefits from a well-regarded primary school, recreation ground, church and community village hall. The surrounding countryside is designated an AONB, providing a lovely environment for walking, riding and cycling. Canterbury offers a wide range of cultural, sporting and recreational amenities. There is a good range of educational facilities, both in the independent and state sectors.



The details


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Can I be stopped from seeing my grandchild?



With so much financial pressure on parents of children and the fact that in the UK, we pay more for our childcare as a proportion of income than anywhere else in the world, never have extended family been a more important part of raising our young. Grandparents and grandchildren can have exceptionally strong bonds and a very different enriching relationship with each other.

In circumstances where parents are separating, one reoccurring question arises: what do grandparents do when they want to enjoy the same quality of time with their grandchildren and they experience resistance from one or both parents?

It is tempting for many people to reach first

for the obvious answer – that this is something which can be resolved efficiently by a court. However, particularly within the last five years, a number of disadvantages have become apparent as the way these matters are handled within the legal system has changed:

- Simple contact matters are commonly dealt with by Magistrates who have no specific legal training. Allied with this, it can be difficult to request a transfer of a case to a Judge. Often cases before Magistrates are not handled efficiently;
- In some areas of the country at present, hearings can be removed from the diary up until the day of the hearing. This can cause a lot of stress and wasted costs. It is

predominantly because there aren't enough Judges of Magistrates to hear matters;

- Cases are taking longer and longer to get to hearings and it is harder to process paperwork for cases or track progress as the Ministry of Justice seek to save costs in a variety of ways.

Added with this, going to court to try to discuss contact matters in any circumstances can be an experience where it is common for all parties to feel like their relationship is worse after proceedings than before it. This is largely because the court system by nature pits one party against the other. Parents and grandparents are left free, or even encouraged to raise allegations and air their grievances which can be difficult to heal when the court building is firmly in the rear-view mirror.

The problems which have arisen within any family dynamic preventing grandparent contact will be unique. As a result, it is worth thinking first about whether anyone trusted by parents and grandparents alike could help 'mediate' a solution, either professionally or more informally. Hopefully, attitudes will not have hardened to make this impossible or too tense an experience to contemplate. If there is only one resistant parent, contact can be managed with the grandparents having contact whilst their own child does, although this isn't ideal. If there is no alternative, normally when both parents resist contact, grandparents can issue proceedings at court. It is worth remembering before embarking on this that grandparents do not have a right to see a grandchild. Therefore, unless court pressure or negotiation can shift attitudes, a court can't force a parent to make a child available to spend time with a grandparent.

Furthermore, in order for an application for contact to succeed to a full hearing, grandparents will need to apply to a Judge for permission to issue an application. At a preliminary hearing, in order to accede to such a request, the court will have to consider:

- The grandparents' relationship with the grandchild
- The nature of the application
- If contact with the grandparents would be harmful in any way to the child
- If continuing the contact with the grandparents would impact negatively on the rest of the family.

It takes extensive practical as well as legal experience to advise comprehensively in these circumstances because the important issues are not wholly legal. Grandparents may ask themselves (as parents do before issuing contact cases in court) 'Do I risk making my relationship worse with my family in applying to court?', and 'Are the dynamics of our family such that more informal ways of discussing things are more likely to work?'

Court proceedings can lead to lasting compromise if the parties are willing and evidence is obtained and presented with the best interests of the child or children involved. The best way to do this is to employ the considerable skill of an expert, to avoid the bear traps along the way.

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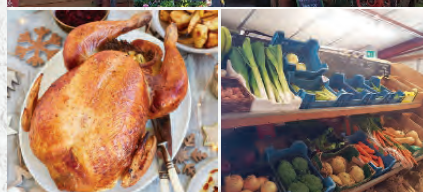
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WINE AND FAMILY

a winning combination at Chartham Vineyard

Our writer, Louise Tomlin visits an East Kent vineyard to take a look at how a family run business, established only a decade ago, has allowed them to, not only safeguard their family's heritage, maintain and encourage links with their local community, but also do something worthwhile with the family's farm and land that is creating a lasting legacy for the next generations.

Nestling in the gentle sloping downs south west of Canterbury is Burnt House Farm. The farm, which has been long established in this picturesque spot for hundreds of years, has some very fine barns and out buildings that are at least four hundred years old, one of these; the old dovecote has caught the attention of English

Heritage and been cited as a rare remaining example of an early version of 'vertical farming'. The structure, although in need of some renovation is still in pretty good condition despite its age. It has two low arched doorways on the ground floor, which indicates it was used to house pigs. The next level was where the chickens lived, with ample space on the



top story for roosts for pigeons and doves. The old farmyard conjures up an evocative scene of farming in times gone by and is delightfully attractive. Today the hundred or so acres of farmland are given over to a tenant farmer and mostly sown to wild flower meadows.

The current owner, Roz Waller, a retired local GP and Richard Goodenough, who has 25 years of lecturing in Environmental Sciences under his belt, inherited the farm in the early 2010s when Roz's parents, who had purchased the farm in the 1950s, sadly passed away.

The couple, at this point was tasked with coming up with a plan for the farm, which was Roz's childhood home. They were approached by developers, however the thought of the old place being carved up and redeveloped, no matter how sympathetically it was done, wasn't something they could live with. Inspiration eventually came for them in the shape of wine. As lifelong fans and having visited many vineyards around the world, they hit on a plan to establish a vineyard on ten acres of the land, whilst a tenant farmer utilised the remaining ninety or so acres. This would allow them to do something meaningful with the land and create a business they could become immersed in through their retirement years. It would also satisfy their desire to protect the



farm and its history, which would be good for the community, whilst sitting well with their consciences.

It was an inspired idea indeed; research showed that the gentle slopes to be planted with vines were remarkably similar terrain to the famous Champagne region. The chalky soil, aspect and microclimate all stacked up to a very favourable ecosystem for viticulture. In fact it turns out there is a long history of vine growing in the area. Records in the archive at nearby Canterbury Cathedral, dating back to 1300, bear this out, with details of a vineyard in Chartham at Deanery farm. The wine produced then probably wouldn't have been suited to our modern taste and would have been very sour, needing to be sweetened with honey.

Chartham Vineyard has flourished, and today is very much a family affair. Richard's son Andy is the vineyard manager, daughter Rachel is also involved in the business and is well placed with her work for Wine Tours of Kent who offer guided and bespoke wine tours



of English vineyards. The next generation is also represented, granddaughter Arianna helps out in between her studies, and Jack helps Andy in the vineyard hoping soon to take an apprenticeship with an English vineyard. So there are three generations of wine enthusiasts in the family. It's not only been good for the family but very beneficial to the local community of Chartham, the Vineyard is open to the public every Saturday when there are regular tours, wine tastings and sales. Visitors

are encouraged to book a tour prior to visiting, with wine lovers coming from far and wide, not just the local Kent area but all over the country, including Europe and further afield, recently they had a party of over forty tourists from Norway.

Diversification is a must for many farmers these days and the need to add value, create more interest and engagement has not been missed here. Throughout the year the Vineyard hosts regular art and craft exhibitions along with other events in the cow barn gallery, workshop studio and Great Barn within the beautiful historic courtyard buildings. These have been sensitively renovated whilst taking great care to retain their important historic features and rustic charm. They are regularly used not just for exhibitions but also hired for functions and events. This is a perfect way



QUALITY OVER QUANTITY IS PARAMOUNT, THEIR WINE IS PRODUCED SOLELY FROM GRAPES GROWN ON CHARTHAM VINEYARD THAT ARE HARVESTED BY HAND,



of bringing the ancient buildings back into a meaningful use in the present day, and serves the local community well.

All of this, of course is the product of the germ of an idea over a decade ago to grow grapes on the land. Having recognised the similarity of their chalk downs to the 'terroir' of those around Reims that is famed for producing sparkling wines, Roz and Richard chose two champagne varieties of rootstock to suit the location, with its cool maritime climate and chalky-soil, these are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Their full selection of four grape varieties of Chardonnay, Bacchus, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris allows them to produce six types of wine including sparkling rosé and white, still red wine and still white, by using traditional methods, that's as long as the weather gods smile on them.

The last ten years has been a journey of discovery regarding the cultivation of grapes and winemaking for the whole family. They have developed a company philosophy, with distinct principles they adhere to. Quality over quantity is paramount, their wine is produced

solely from grapes grown on Chartham Vineyard that are harvested by hand, they don't take short cuts and recognise that there is no substitute for time and patience. They respect their land and see themselves as its custodians, which means employing traditional practices, whilst taking a modern approach to winemaking and paying careful attention to sustainable methods in cultivation and processing to reduce the environmental impact and promote biodiversity.

Embedded in this ethos are their deep-rooted beliefs in family values and the business's position in their community. They rely on volunteers to help pick their grapes in the autumn. There is significant interest from the local community, with forty plus volunteer pickers, mainly locals but some from as far away as Medway over 35 miles away, happily turning up for each harvest. They start at 8.00am, fuelled by coffee and homemade cakes at break times, working on until every bunch



of grapes has been picked, which is usually by early afternoon, ready in time for the lorry to take them to be crushed.

Louise decided to take part in one of the harvests to see for herself how the process worked and admits “I thought I would have to ‘suffer for my art’ but no such thing occurred. I was surrounded by enthusiastic pickers, many of whom come back year after year to help out. Everyone, including me, seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the work. The first coffee and cake break came just at the right time to take a breather and offered an opportunity to chat to the throng of willing workers to ask the question, why they were there? Responses were unerringly similar and can be distilled into a few lines: they enjoy it, they like doing something useful, they like meeting people, the cake’s delicious and most importantly they like the vineyard, the people who run it and their wonderful wine. Everyone receives a thank you bottle of wine at the end of the day and, once all the harvests are finished the family hold a big hog roast in the Great Barn to say a proper thank you to everyone that has participated.”

It’s a great way of getting engagement from

their local community. That takes care of the harvest, which as predicted is a bumper one this year at nearly double previous years. But how about actually making the wine? The grapes are taken off to Litmus Wines in Dorking to be crushed as soon as they are picked, which has proved to be a successful relationship since 2015. They must be doing something right and have hit on a recipe for success as their wines have won multiple awards in

recent years, Roz and Richard say that they find it reassuring to get recognition of the quality of their wines in national, IEWA and Wine GB, and also international competitions, Decanter and IWC.

It is truly a tale of success, for Chartham Vineyard. Louise asked the couple what they consider the best thing that has come out of their journey to create their business? “Our Rose de Noir sparkling, Pinot Noir 2022 and Pinot Gris 2022 and how wonderful it is to have three generations of our family involved. That’s our biggest win.”



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DECEMBER

SATURDAY: 2nd

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend;
Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge
Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 3rd

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

MONDAY: 4th

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks)

TUESDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th

Rye

THURSDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th

Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 9th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 10th

Elham; Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells;
Staplehurst

SATURDAY: 16th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 17th

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst;
Tunbridge Wells; Watlington

SATURDAY: 23rd

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Knockholt; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks);
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Whitstable

SUNDAY: 24th & 31st

Tunbridge Wells

JANUARY

TUESDAY 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st

Rye

THURSDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 6th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend;
Penshurst; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks);
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 7th

Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 13th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 14th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge;
Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 20th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 21st

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst;
Tunbridge Wells; Watlington

SATURDAY: 27th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 28th

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells

FEBRUARY

THURSDAY: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th

Hastings; Rolvenden;
Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 3rd

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 4th

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 10th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend;
Hythe; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks);
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 11th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge;
Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 17th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend;
Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 18th

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst;
Tunbridge Wells; Watlington

SATURDAY: 24th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;
Knockholt; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks);
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Whitstable

SUNDAY: 27th

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells



FESTIVE COCKTAILS

As family and friends come together to eat drink and be merry,
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IRISH FLIP

The flip is one of the oldest categories of mixed drinks – here we see an Irish take on the classic. Flips were originally served hot, but this drink works equally well cold. Similar to eggnog, it's a good drink to serve after a meal.

50ml whiskey

25ml stout reduction syrup

1 whole egg

10ml Pedro Ximenez sherry

freshly grated nutmeg, to garnish

Add all the drink ingredients to a cocktail shaker with a scoop of ice. Garnish with freshly grated nutmeg.

** To make the stout reduction syrup:*

500ml dark stout (such as Guinness)

250ml demara sugar.

Put the stout in a saucepan, and simmer over a medium heat for 30-40 minutes until the volume is reduced. Remove from the heat and allow to cool before bottling and refrigerating. Use as directed and within 1 month.



Recipes taken from *Festive Cocktails & Canapés*, published by Ryland Peters & Small (£14.99). Photography Ryland Peters & Small.

SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Forget the milk and gingerbread cookies – this is what Santa really wants to find when he calls at your home this holiday season.

20ml Pedro Ximenez sherry

15ml ginger wine

15ml freshly squeezed orange juice

well-chilled Prosecco, to top
strip of orange zest, to garnish

Put the sherry, ginger wine and orange juice in a cocktail shaker and add a handful of ice cubes. Shake well and strain into a chilled Champagne flute. Top up with Prosecco. Squeeze the orange zest strip in half lengthways so that the essential oils in the skin spritz on to the drink, then drop it in. Serve immediately.

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Pan fried seabass fillet, crab ravioli, dill butter sauce
Chestnut mushroom & cavolo nero risotto, toasted hazelnuts

DESSERTS

Christmas pudding & brandy sauce
Spiced rum glazed pineapple, lime syrup, coconut ice cream
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Jan 28th Sunday Brand New Bag

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Feb 11th Sunday Nightwatch

Feb 18th Sunday Dylan band

Feb 25th Sunday Blue Devils

March 3rd Sunday Steve Bolton

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Please refer the website as bands are subject to change. www.thepubonthebeach.co.uk



"I love poussins, not least because everyone gets their own little bird. Marsala (a wine fortified with brandy) adds a sweet, nutty note to the creamy sauce and gives the dish a rich, wintry flavour. The crispy sage garnish is a lovely finishing touch."

PUB KITCHEN

Tom Kerridge

“British pub food has come so far over the past decade and it’s been really exciting to see. In celebration, I’ve taken the most popular items on the menus in brilliant modern British pubs and given them a few fresh twists. This is food for everyone - it’s the food I’m excited about, it’s the food I like to cook at home, and I hope you enjoy it too.”



SERVES
2

YOU WILL NEED

2 poussins
30g butter, softened
4 sage leaves, finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Marsala sauce

30g butter
2 banana shallots, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
150ml Marsala
200ml chicken stock
8 sage leaves, finely chopped
200ml double cream

Garnish

1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter
A handful of sage leaves

ROASTED POUSSIN WITH MARSALA & SAGE SAUCE

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan /gas 6.

Place the poussins in individual oven dishes. Mix the softened butter with the chopped sage and season with salt and pepper. Rub the sage butter all over the poussins. Roast on the middle shelf of the oven for 35-40 minutes or until the skin is golden and crisp and the poussins are cooked through.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the butter in a sauté pan until melted and foaming, then add the shallots and garlic, stir well and cook for 3-4 minutes to soften. Add the Marsala and simmer until it is reduced by half. Pour in the chicken stock and simmer until the liquor is reduced by half again. Add the chopped sage, stir in the cream and simmer until the sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the poussins from the oven and set aside to rest in a warm place for 5-10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil and butter in a small frying pan over a medium heat. When the butter is melted and foaming, add the sage leaves and cook until crispy. Remove from the heat.

Transfer the poussins to warmed shallow serving bowls, spoon the Marsala sauce around them and scatter over the crispy sage leaves. Serve with some cavolo nero or other leafy green vegetable on the side.

Tom Kerridge has spent a lifetime perfecting next-level pub cooking. In Pub Kitchen he distils that knowhow into 100 super-tasty recipes for home cooks. Taking inspiration from modern gastropubs, Tom's recipes are simple, contemporary and delicious.

SERVES
4

STICKY DATE AND BANANA PUDDINGS

YOU WILL NEED

1 tbsp softened butter
to grease the dishes
100g plain white flour,
plus 1tbsp to dust
100ml dark rum
1 tsp bicarbonate of
soda
150g pitted dates,
chopped
85g vegetable suet
85g soft dark brown
sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 large free-range eggs

Toffee sauce

200ml double cream
100g soft dark brown
sugar
75g butter
A small pinch of salt

To finish

2 small bananas
2 tbsp demerara sugar

METHOD

Brush 4 individual ovenproof dishes (250ml capacity) with the softened butter and dust lightly with flour, shaking out any excess.

Pour the rum and 100ml water into a saucepan and bring to the boil, then take off the heat and add the bicarbonate of soda and dates. Pop a lid on the pan and leave to stand for 10-15 minutes to allow the dates to soak up the liquid and cool down.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4.

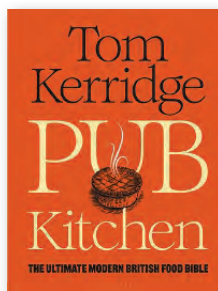
Tip the dates and liquid into a large bowl and add the flour, suet, brown sugar, vanilla extract and eggs. Beat until evenly combined. Spoon the mixture into the prepared dishes and bake in the oven for 30-35 minutes until golden brown.

Meanwhile, to make the toffee sauce, pour the cream into a saucepan and add the brown sugar, butter and salt. Place over a low heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved, then bring to the boil. Simmer for 2-3 minutes, then remove from the heat.

Peel and thinly slice the bananas. Once you've removed the puddings from the oven, arrange the banana slices, overlapping, around the edge of each dish. Sprinkle the banana slices liberally with demerara sugar and run a cook's blowtorch over them to caramelise the sugar.

Serve the date and banana puddings
with the toffee sauce in a jug on the side.

*Recipes from Pub Kitchen:
The Ultimate Modern British Food Bible
by Tom Kerridge.
Bloomsbury Publishing.*





“This naughty, boozy pud is one of our pub classics. Sticky, caramelised bananas shine alongside a sweet date pudding, and the easy-to-make toffee sauce served alongside takes it to another level of indulgence.”



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH WINE

Until the 1980s, producing wine in England was almost unheard of – yes there were a few vineyards in the South East making thin, sharp, white wines, but most of these were not memorable at all.

If you remember the 1980s, the trend in England was for sweet German wines such as Liebfraumilch – yes – I used to be a fan, and so we took a leaf out of their book and added sweetened grape juice to our sharp white wines to make them more palatable. But it didn't really work in the same way did it? Our cool climate and lack of viticultural experience just wasn't hitting the spot.

The birth of our sparkling wine

But suddenly, in the late 1980s, we discovered that much of the soil in the North and South Downs was very similar to that of Champagne and, with a similar, cool climate too, it was perfect conditions for making top quality sparkling wine. This discovery kickstarted the so-called 'Nyetimber effect', closely followed by Ridgeview and we haven't looked back since. Our sparkling wines quite rapidly started to gain an international reputation, winning numerous awards and we are now seen by the rest of the world as sparkling wine specialists.

Such is the international recognition of our sparkling wines that even the French

have taken an interest in investing in our land with a view to wine production and of course that can only be good news. However, France and the rest of Europe have a very strict system of what grapes can be planted where according to a hierarchy based on price and quality. Britain, at the moment, does not have a tight, regulated system which means that vineyard owners can experiment with grape varieties and blends as there are no specific 'rules' to say what is not allowed and although some might like to see the development of a 'cru' system – it may actually stifle the creativity which we presently enjoy.

Although our still wines don't have quite the same international reputation, they are improving consistently and the domestic following is growing all the time. This has created a new wave of vineyards springing up everywhere from Cornwall to Yorkshire with the greatest concentration in the South East and East Anglia. Today there are nearly 900 vineyards and close to 200 wineries operating in England, with over 10,000 acres of land under vine, an increase of 70 per cent in over just five years – (since 2018).

How has the climate affected our vines?

We know that the UK has already warmed by 1°C since around the 1950s. We can see this in observations from our land-based weather stations, but there are a lot of other ways we can observe this change:

- Increased temperature in coastal seas around the UK
- Less frost and snow
- Longer and more frequent warm and hot spells
- Shorter and less frequent cold spells
- Breaking many high temperature records

Warmer weather means that varieties like Chardonnay, Bacchus and even Pinot Noir can fully ripen and are now the dominant varieties in our southern vineyards so to a large extent, that is good news. But England, like other parts of Europe, can still be hit by vicious Spring frosts, such as those in 2017, which caused an enormous amount of damage. Spring frost will actually cause a lot more damage to vines that have had a mild winter as opposed to a colder winter as the buds

are more developed and therefore vulnerable. So, although it seems that the warming up of the climate is good news – caution and expert vineyard management is needed to cope with our somewhat unpredictable climate.

Location, location, location

When vineyards starting springing up everywhere in the post Nyetimber boom, often it was a patch of farmland that was unused and

so owners thought – oh why not plant some vines? However, a lot of this land was heavy, clay soil, not the best as when it rains, the soil gets waterlogged as it doesn't drain well and this is not good news for vines at all.

Another bad choice is sites that are windy and North facing – all vines in the Northern hemisphere are south facing (except in the warmest regions such as the Douro in Portugal) – maximising the sunlight available. However, over time, would-be vineyard owners became more knowledgeable as to the best sites and locations for vines to flourish and most of the North and South Downs in Southern England is not only a great location, but has some of the best soils for the grape varieties grown.

Rowena Hawtin DipWset

What are the best soils?

A ring of chalk and limestone runs around the Paris basin and extends across the Channel to the cliffs of Dover into southern England. These soils of limestone and chalk not only drain well but reflect heat back to the vine which aids ripening – absolutely perfect. But it is not only limestone and chalk soils, we also have well drained gravel beds – ideal for retaining the heat of the sun as well as greensands and sandy clay which pop up in Kent and Sussex – this new wave of vineyard owners know how to exploit these conditions to produce the best wine possible. English wine has now come of age in producing world class wines and it's set to get better and better. Why not pay a visit to your local vineyard and celebrate our fabulous English wines.



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